

Virginia Musician Named 2002 Young Artist Competition Winner

By Technical Sergeants Jill Westeyn and Melinda Burts

Percussionist Eric Roberts, a junior at Lake Braddock High School in Burke, Virginia, has been chosen as the 2002 winner of the Colonel George S. Howard Young Artist Competition. He will perform the first movement of Paul Creston's *Concerto for Marimba* with The United States Air Force Concert Band on March 3, as part of the Guest Artist Series at Constitution Hall.

Eric performs in his school's symphonic band, marching band, jazz band and orchestra, and is also with the National Symphony Orchestra's Youth Fellowship Program, where he studies with NSO timpanist, John Tafoya. Additionally, he serves as assistant principal percussionist with the American Youth Philharmonic.

During his sophomore year, Eric was a member of the Mount Vernon Youth Orchestra. He has appeared with the McLean Youth Orchestra performing on marimba, and has received superior recognition in district, regional and state percussion competitions.

In the summer of 2001, Eric attended Boston University's Tanglewood Institute, where he was a member of the Young Artists' Orchestra. While at Tanglewood, he was one of five students chosen to appear on the National Public Radio show *From the Top*, a showcase for the nation's top young classical musicians.



Eric Roberts

The competition, which began in 1994, is named for the late commander and conductor of The United States Air Force Band who served from 1944 until his retirement in 1963. At its inception, the competition was open to all band instrumentalists in grades 10-12. However, two years ago, eligibility was expanded to include 9th grade students. The competition was also modified so that woodwind students compete in alternate years from brass and percussionists.

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The Young Artist Competition has become extremely competitive in its nine year existence. The preliminary round requires eligible applicants to submit a video-taped performance of the required repertoire. A panel of instrumentalists from the Concert Band views the tapes and selects finalists to proceed to the next round. Finalists travel to Bolling Air Force Base to perform live for a panel of judges consisting of principal players and officers from the Band. The judges choose a winner, who in turn performs as a soloist with the Concert Band during the Guest Artist Series.

This year, the competition was fierce! Our talented finalists were Matt Kantorski, a sophomore percussionist from Bowling Green, Ohio; Lauren Veronie, a senior euphonium player from Willis, Texas; and Colleen Wheelahan, a senior percussionist from Charlotte, North Carolina. After serious deliberation, the judges were able to make a decision. They declared Lauren Veronie runner-up, and Eric Roberts the winner.

Each of the finalists deserves a huge round of applause for their accomplishments, as does Senior Master Sergeant Lucy Snell and her team for handling this year's event. They all did a fabulous job coordinating the competition.

**The United States Air Force Band
Washington, D.C.**

Colonel Lowell E. Graham, commander/conductor

With the Guest Artist Series in full swing, I am constantly reminded that I am surrounded by a team like no other in the music industry. As I write this, these dedicated professionals are hard at work tending to the myriad details necessary to coordinate and present the seamless world-class performances that take place on Sunday afternoons during the months of February and March each year. Early Monday morning, they are hard at work, wrapping up the details from the previous evening's event, while at the same time gearing up for the arrival of the next guest. For the past eleven years, the responsibility for securing guest artists and coordinating the Series has rested on the shoulders of the Band's Director of Public Affairs, Chief Master Sergeant Daisy Jackson. She and her award-winning team have been instrumental in carrying on the Series, established in 1966 by conductor emeritus, Colonel (Retired) Arnald D. Gabriel.



In the last issue of *Cadenza*, you read about the role Music Production plays behind the scenes, creating scores to suit the needs of the artists on a weekly basis. Add to that, the efforts of the men and women in Technical Support, Public Affairs, Music Library, Operations and Supply. Each is responsible for accomplishing deadline-sensitive tasks integral to the successful presentation every Sunday afternoon. That's *behind* the scenes. As the support team works its logistical magic, the musicians are busy preparing for the performance. Every week, members from various performing units come together to form the guest artists' accompanying orchestra. The Guest Artist Series provides musicians from the Band's eight separate performing ensembles a great opportunity to perform in a single ensemble with one another—something that rarely occurs at any other time of the year due to each unit's busy performing schedule. For example, it is a rare treat for musicians from the Concert Band to share the stage with members of the Airmen of Note, each holding the other in the highest esteem for their respective musical specialties. The combined talents of the Band's various ensembles create a formidable orchestra and an amazing musical experience. And of course, none of this would be possible without you, our cherished audience.

As the series continues through the month of March, the lineup is just as exciting as ever. It features the talents of internationally renowned guitarist, José Feliciano, Tony Award winning actress and singer, Melba Moore and "The Stradivarius Voice," Maureen McGovern. On another very important note, the 36th season of the Guest Artist Series is a milestone for the Band. With her projected retirement later this year, Chief Jackson has coordinated her final series. A twenty-year veteran of the Band, Chief Jackson has spent more than half of her career dedicated to preserving the Series' traditions and taking it to new heights. I know I speak for the entire organization when I offer her my sincere thanks and deep gratitude for a job extraordinarily well done. Thanks, Chief!

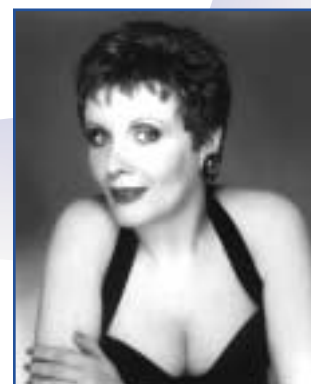
Lowell E. Jackson



José Feliciano
March 3



Melba Moore
March 10



Maureen McGovern
March 24

Singing Sergeants Summary

By Technical Sergeant Brian Davis

In the last issue of *Cadenza*, I introduced you to the officer-in-charge and director of the Singing Sergeants, Captain Chad Steffey. In this issue, I would like to showcase our associate conductor, alto vocalist, Master Sergeant Angela B. Williams. Sgt. Williams is a graduate of East Carolina University in Greenville, North Carolina, where she earned a Bachelor of Music degree in Vocal Pedagogy. She has worked with nationally acclaimed composers and conductors such as Daniel Pinkham, Dale Warland, Robert Shaw and Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Craig Jessop, as well as Washington, D.C., luminaries Dan Gawthrop, Paul Hill and Don McCullough.

Sgt. Williams comes from a musical family. Her mother is a vocalist, and her brother and father both played the trombone. She loves to tell the story of her first choir audition when she was in the fourth grade. She was shocked by the teacher's response. "You can't carry a tune in a bucket," the teacher said. Angela was not allowed to join the choir. The next year, a new music teacher wanted to meet all prior choir students in the gymnasium. Sgt. Williams took a chance, went to the gym and was a dedicated choir member every year thereafter until she graduated from high school.

When asked about the responsibilities of the associate conductor's job, Sgt. Williams shared her observations. "One of the most difficult things about facing the choir is interpreting the different moods of individual singers," she said. "Musicians can be temperamental. We all have really big personalities, and when you are conducting, you see everything. When I'm behind the conductor's stand, I can tell when people are happy or sad and that can affect my conducting because it affects me."

With a vision to always move forward, she constantly strives to improve the standard of the choir. "The choir moves at such a fast pace, and you really have to stay on the ball. It can be exhausting." The new job has

affected her attitude—she now holds herself to a much higher standard. "I can't expect anyone in the chorus to know their notes and be prepared if I'm not prepared myself." To stress this point she added, "If I am not prepared as a conductor, it's reflected in the way the chorus sounds." As associate conductor, Sgt. Williams helps prepare the chorus for Captain Steffey and Colonel Graham to conduct in performances. On occasion, she has the opportunity to conduct performances as well.



Master Sgt. Angela B. Williams

Sgt. Williams' advice to young musicians seeking a career in choral music conducting is, "Continue your education and earn a music degree." The ability to sight-read music is another necessary skill. "Focus on stage presence and overall musicianship" she says, "and learn to play a musical instrument." Sgt. Williams plays the clarinet and piano. They are tremendous tools for her when sight-reading. For example, when she reads a new vocal piece, she visualizes the notes on the piano.

The Singing Sergeants is one of the few full-time, professional choirs in America. Sgt. Williams believes that the ensemble is an incredible tool for communication. "Unlike instrumentalists, we have the ability to reach people with words," she says. "Our chorus is unique because we can sing it all; country, pop, opera, Broadway, jazz and so much more." In contrast, most professional choirs today focus on a single musical style. As a military choir, she feels that the Singers have a tremendous impact on international diplomacy. She cites a great example. "Let's say we are needed to sing at the chief of staff's quarters for an official protocol event. The honored guest is from Italy and likes opera. We can send someone from our group to sing Italian opera. In a sense, we are communicating with the guest in his native language. This forms an emotional bond that helps cement ties between our two nations."

As you read this, the Singers are busy preparing for tour. In April, we will perform in venues from Virginia to Florida. See the calendar on page 7 for details. ☺

The United States Air Force Band is wholeheartedly committed to reflecting the diversity of our great nation. We actively encourage individuals from all cultural and ethnic backgrounds to learn about our organization and seek positions in "America's Band."

Cadenza

Colonel Lowell E. Graham, Commander
Chief Master Sergeant Daisy Jackson, Director of Public Affairs
Technical Sergeant Tara Islas, Graphic Layout Editor
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Airmen of Note Notes

By Master Sergeant Joe Jackson

On January 26, 2002, at Howard University's Cramton Auditorium in Washington, D.C., the Airmen of Note was honored to add saxophonist Jimmy Heath to the long list of Jazz Heritage Series guest artists who have performed with us through the years. Following an Airmen of Note "warmup set" filled with exciting and soulful performances by the Note's many soloists, the audience was immediately warmed by the legendary sax man's personal charm and humor, and spent the remainder of the evening riveted by Heath's brutally blistering brand of be-bop artistry.

Each year, the winter months provide the Airmen of Note the opportunity to support the Band's Guest Artist Series, and on February 10, the Note performed with saxophonist Kirk Whalum. On February 17, the Note joined forces with jazz legend Dame Cleo Laine and saxophonist John Dankworth.



Senior Master Sgt. Saul Miller & Master Sgt. Tracey Wright get their respective grooves on.



Master Sgt. Bruce Gates

His Air Force career began in 1981 with the 505th Air Force Band of the Midwest at Chanute Air Force Base in Illinois, where he played lead and jazz trumpet. Since 1986, when he assumed his position with the Airmen of Note, Sgt. Gates' leadership and presence on the bandstand has been a powerful influence on the band's musical endeavors. The members of the Airmen of Note wish Sgt. Gates the very best as he continues his musical career in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Replacing Master Sgt. Gates will be the former lead trumpeter from the USAF Band of the Rockies' jazz ensemble, the Falconaires, Master Sgt. Kevin Burns. ☺

The Note heads out for its annual spring tour in April. We are traveling south, down the east coast and the tour will wrap up in sunny Florida. See the calendar on pages 6 - 7 for details.

Also this spring, the Airmen of Note will say a reluctant farewell to a person who has held a very prominent role in the band both musically and personally, lead trumpeter Master Sergeant Bruce Gates.



Saxophonist Jimmy Heath performs with the Airmen of Note.

High Flight Happenings

By Technical Sergeant Darden Safley

Greetings once again from High Flight! As we leave the winter months behind and look forward to warmer weather, we are gearing up for our busy summer schedule. Preparing music for these summer concerts takes time and effort as we rework current show material and arrange new Top 40 hits to provide top-drawer entertainment to our loyal patrons. The man behind the scenes making it all happen is Senior Master Sergeant Rob Henley. On stage, Sgt. Henley is High Flight's keyboardist, but he's also our instrumental music director and chief arranger. Every tune performed by High Flight has passed through Sgt. Henley's capable hands before it is presented in public. In this edition of *Cadenza*, we pay homage to this valuable High Flight member.

Originally from El Paso, Texas, Sgt. Henley began working at the age of 16 as a professional pianist, composer and music software specialist. He joined the Air Force in 1984, and was first assigned to Lackland Air Force Base, Texas with the Air Force Band of the West. During his first year there, he was selected as the Airman of the Year. In 1986, Sgt. Henley joined The United States Air Force Band in Washington, D.C. During his 15 years with the Band, he has performed with virtually every musical ensemble within the organization, including Silver Wings, Diplomats and Singing



Senior Master Sgt. Henley entertaining in an intimate setting.

Sergeants. The Airmen of Note requested Sgt. Henley to perform with them at the White House, and Sgt. Henley is always in demand as a soloist for military protocol functions in the National Capital Region.

One of his many career highlights is a live broadcast performance on CNN for the Khobar Tower Remembrance ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery. He was also selected to perform in a multi-service military chorus for the internationally televised Hope and Inspiration Ceremony held at the Pentagon this past October.



Senior Master Sgt. Rob Henley

Sgt. Henley takes responsibility for all High Flight arrangements and digital sequencing of shows, dances, small ensemble performances and recordings. He has performed extensively on both of High Flight's compact disc recordings, *High Flight* and *Highlights*. He can also be heard on the Silver Wings recording, titled *Freedom*. In addition to his considerable musical skills, Sgt. Henley is also a nationally certified A+ Computer Service Technician, and he uses his advanced knowledge of digital recording software to enhance High Flight's products; in short, he is an integral part of High Flight's mission success.

With Sgt. Henley's talent and skills in such high demand, we in the ensemble are extremely grateful to have such a consummate musician within our ranks and in our family. We pay homage to this dedicated musician and dedicated friend. Thanks for all you do Rob! ☺

The Air Force Strings

By Technical Sergeant Henry Tyszler

To most people, The United States Air Force means cutting-edge technology. From superior aircraft, to weapons systems and intelligence, our Air Force is second to none when it comes to developing state-of-the-art tools to accomplish its mission. Less is known, however, about some of our more primitive tools—those whose shelf life is measured not in years, but in centuries. These are tools that have been hand-hewn from wood; many crafted before the Declaration of Independence was signed. They are the violins, violas, cellos and double basses with which The United States Air Force Strings produce their world-class sound.

The diverse inventory of instruments in the Strings' arsenal range from a violin created in 1716 by Parisian craftsman Jacques Boquay, to a cello produced in Maryland in 1995. In much the same way that the Strings search for new members through an arduous audition process, no effort is spared in the selection of their instruments. As part of the acquisition process, a "search committee" is formed. Members scout out violin shops and other sources for a suitable instrument. When a candidate instrument is identified, it is examined and tested by all members of the committee for condition, tone quality and comfort. Only then is a decision made to acquire the instrument.

Thanks to the foresight and hard work of past generations of the Strings, we now have a world-class inventory of instruments that will continue to serve many future generations of Strings members.

Congratulations to Master Sergeant Alex Dean for being selected as principal second violinist of the String Orchestra. As principal, he makes sure the sound of his section matches the ensemble, as well as the intent of the conductor and the concertmaster.

Congratulations are also due to Senior Master Sergeant Jane Bockenek for being selected as The USAF Band's Senior Noncommissioned Officer of the Year. In addition to her performance and managerial duties as strolling director, Sgt. Bockenek donates her time and talent to numerous causes including cancer research, educational outreach, morale-boosting performances at hospitals and Holocaust commemoration events.

On April 21, at 3 p.m., the Strings will perform at Trinity Lutheran Church in Lansdale, Pennsylvania. The program will feature violist and Lansdale native Master Sergeant Deborah Volker, who will be the afternoon's soloist. See the calendar for details. ☺

MARCH

- 1 CHAMBER PLAYERS SERIES, 8 p.m., "An Evening of Music for Brass," featuring Technical Sergeants Ken Oedemann and Kathleen Monroe, The Lyceum, 201 South Washington Street, Alexandria, Virginia.
- 3 GUEST ARTIST SERIES, 3 p.m., featuring José Feliciano, "the greatest living guitarist," DAR Constitution Hall, 18th & D Streets NW, Washington, D.C.
- 5 CHAMBER PLAYERS SERIES, 8 p.m., "An Evening of Music for Brass," featuring members of the Ceremonial Brass and Concert Band, George Washington Masonic National Memorial, 101 Callahan Drive, Alexandria, Virginia.
- 7 The Singing Sergeants, 7 p.m., ACDA Northwest Division Convention Concert, First Baptist Church, 902 Market Street, Tacoma, Washington.
- 8 The Concert Band, 8 p.m., American Bandmasters Association Convention Concert, Century II Concert Hall, Wichita, Kansas.
- 10 GUEST ARTIST SERIES, 3 p.m., featuring Tony Award winning actress and singer, Melba Moore, DAR Constitution Hall, 18th & D Streets NW, Washington, D.C.
- 14 CHAMBER PLAYERS SERIES, 8 p.m., "An Evening of Music for Cello and Double Bass," featuring Master Sergeant Christopher Moehlenkamp and Technical Sergeant Matthew Murray, John Addison Concert Hall, Harmony Hall Regional Center, 10701 Livingston Road, Fort Washington, Maryland.
- 15 Barnstormers, 1:15 p.m., Georgetown University's "Music Is..." Concert Series, McNeir Hall, New North Building, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C.
- 16 CHAMBER PLAYERS SERIES, 8 p.m., "An Evening of Music for Chamber Winds," The College of Southern Maryland, 8730 Mitchell Road, La Plata, Maryland.
- 22 CHAMBER PLAYERS SERIES, 8 p.m., "An Evening of Music for Trumpet," featuring Master Sergeant Andrew Wilson, The Lyceum, 201 South Washington Street, Alexandria, Virginia.
- 24 GUEST ARTIST SERIES, 3 p.m., featuring "The Stradivarius Voice," Maureen McGovern, DAR Constitution Hall, 18th & D Streets NW, Washington, D.C.
- 28 CHAMBER PLAYERS SERIES, 8 p.m., "An Evening of Music for Flute and Clarinet," featuring Technical Sergeants Stacy Newbrough and Julianna Evans, John Addison Concert Hall, Harmony Hall Regional Center, 10701 Livingston Road, Fort Washington, Maryland.

APRIL

- 2 CHAMBER PLAYERS SERIES, 8 p.m., "An Evening of Music for Woodwind Quintet," George Washington Masonic National Memorial, 101 Callahan Drive, Alexandria, Virginia.
- 5 CHAMBER PLAYERS SERIES, 8 p.m., "An Evening of Music for Voice," featuring Technical Sergeant Anne Seaton, The Lyceum, 201 South Washington Street, Alexandria, Virginia.
- 5 *The Airmen of Note, 7 p.m., Naval Aviation Museum, 1754 Radford Boulevard, Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida, 32508
- 6 *The Airmen of Note, 7 p.m., Fort Walton Beach High School Auditorium, 400 Hollywood Boulevard SW, Fort Walton Beach Florida, 32548
- 8 *The Airmen of Note, 7:30 p.m., Peabody Auditorium, 600 Auditorium Boulevard, Daytona Beach, Florida, 32114
- 9 *The Airmen of Note, 7 p.m., Times-Union Center for the Performing Arts, 300 West Water Street, Jacksonville, Florida, 32202
- 10 *The Airmen of Note, 8 p.m., Ruby Diamond Auditorium, Florida State University, 600 Copeland Street, Tallahassee, Florida, 32306
- 11 *The Airmen of Note, 7:30 p.m., Citrus Curtis Peterson Auditorium, Lecanto High School, 3810 W. Educational Path, Lecanto, Florida, 34460
- 11 "Air Force Band @ Your Library" Series, 3:30 p.m., featuring members of the Air Force Strings, Woodridge Neighborhood Library Children's Room, 1801 Hamlin Street NE, Washington, D.C. Public Transport Information: Take the 80 bus to 18th Street NE
- 11 CHAMBER PLAYERS SERIES, 8 p.m., "An Evening of Music for Saxophone and Flute," featuring Senior Master Sergeant William Marr and Technical Sergeant Jennifer Moore, John Addison Concert Hall, Harmony Hall Regional Center, 10701 Livingston Road, Fort Washington, Maryland.
- 12 *The Airmen of Note, 7:30 p.m., University of Tampa, Plant Hall East Verandah, 401 West Kennedy Boulevard, Tampa, Florida, 33606
- 13 *The Airmen of Note, 7:30 p.m., Hacienda Center, 1200 Avenida Central, Lady Lake, Florida, 32159
- 14 *The Airmen of Note, 3 p.m., Astronaut High School Auditorium, 800 War Eagle Boulevard, Titusville, Florida, 32796

- 15 *The Airmen of Note, 7 p.m., Melbourne Civic Auditorium, 625 East Hibiscus Boulevard, Melbourne, Florida, 32901
- 15 *The United States Air Force Concert Band and Singing Sergeants, Spring Tour, Time and Location TBA, Norfolk, Virginia.
- 16 *The United States Air Force Concert Band and Singing Sergeants, 7 p.m., Dunn Center, Wesleyan College, 3400 N. Wesleyan Boulevard, Rocky Mount, North Carolina, 27804
- 16 *The Airmen of Note, 7:30 p.m., Tanglewood Ballroom, 1600 Tanglewood Parkway, Sebring, Florida, 33872
- 17 *The United States Air Force Concert Band and Singing Sergeants, 7:30 p.m., Memorial Auditorium, 500 Fayetteville Street Mall, Raleigh, North Carolina, 27601
- 17 *The Airmen of Note, 8 p.m., Eissey Theater, Palm Beach Community College North, 3160 PGA Boulevard, Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, 33410
- 18 *The United States Air Force Concert Band and Singing Sergeants, 7:30 p.m., Winthrop Coliseum, Winthrop College, 701 West Oakland Avenue (2 blocks from Main Campus), Rock Hill, South Carolina, 29730
- 18 *The Airmen of Note, 8 p.m., Eissey Theater, Palm Beach Community College North, 3160 PGA Boulevard, Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, 33410
- 18 "Air Force Band @ Your Library" Series, 3:30 p.m., featuring the Barnstormers, Takoma Park Branch Library Children's Room, 416 Cedar Street NW, Washington, D.C. Nearest Metro Station: Takoma
- 19 *The United States Air Force Concert Band and Singing Sergeants, Spring Tour, Time and Location TBA, North Carolina.
- 19 *The Airmen of Note, 7 p.m., Fort Memorial College, Conference Center, 15800 NW 42nd Avenue, Miami, Florida, 33054
- 19 CHAMBER PLAYERS SERIES, 8 p.m., "An Evening of Music for Strings," The Lyceum, 201 South Washington Street, Alexandria, Virginia.
- 20 *The United States Air Force Concert Band and Singing Sergeants, 7 p.m., Ashbrook High School, 2222 South New Hope Road, Gastonia, North Carolina, 28054
- 20 *The Airmen of Note, 8 p.m., Stoneman Douglas High School Auditorium, 5901 Pine Island Road, Parkland, Florida, 33065
- 21 *The United States Air Force Concert Band and Singing Sergeants, 3 p.m., Brooks Center, Clemson University, 221 Brooks, Clemson, South Carolina, 29634
- 22 *The United States Air Force Concert Band and Singing Sergeants, 7:30 p.m., Sumter County Patriot Hall, 145 Haynsworth Street, Sumter, South Carolina, 29150
- 23 *The United States Air Force Concert Band and Singing Sergeants, Hodgson Hall, University of Georgia, 250 River Road, Athens, Georgia, 30602
- 24 *The United States Air Force Concert Band and Singing Sergeants, Spring Tour, Time and Location TBA, Georgia.
- 25 *The United States Air Force Concert Band and Singing Sergeants, Spring Tour, Time and Location TBA, Georgia.
- 25 CHAMBER PLAYERS SERIES, 8 p.m., "An Evening of Music for Trumpet," featuring Technical Sergeants Joshua Lies and Michael Huff, John Addison Concert Hall, Harmony Hall Regional Center, 10701 Livingston Road, Fort Washington, Maryland.
- 26 *The United States Air Force Concert Band and Singing Sergeants, 8 p.m., Albany High School Auditorium, 801 Residence Avenue, Albany, Georgia, 31705
- 27 *The United States Air Force Concert Band and Singing Sergeants, 8 p.m., Florida A&M Lee Hall Auditorium, Tallahassee, Florida, 32307
- 28 *The United States Air Force Concert Band and Singing Sergeants, 3 p.m., Curtis M. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts, 315 Hull Road, Gainesville, Florida, 32611
- 29 *The United States Air Force Concert Band and Singing Sergeants, 7 p.m., Bob Carr Auditorium, 401 West Livingston Street, Orlando, Florida, 32801
- 30 *The United States Air Force Concert Band and Singing Sergeants, 7:30 p.m., Branscomb Auditorium, 111 Lake Hollingsworth Drive, Lakeland, Florida, 33801
- 30 The Airmen of Note, 7:30 p.m., "Jazz at Gettysburg," Gettysburg College, Union Ballroom, West Lincoln Avenue, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

All performances are free and open to the public. An asterisk indicates a free, ticketed event. Performance times and locations are subject to change. For up-to-date information, please visit our website at www.bolling.af.mil/band. For detailed information about performances in the Washington, D.C., area, please call the Concert Line, (202) 767-5658.

PERSONNEL MATTERS

Arrivals

Technical Sergeant Nydia Noriega, Singing Sergeants
Technical Sergeant Jonathan McPherson, piano, Diplomats

Departures

Master Sergeant Ron Erler, retirement
Master Sergeant Bruce Gates, retirement
Master Sergeant Douglas Jordan, retirement
Technical Sergeant Tyler Kuebler, separation
Technical Sergeant Erin Gittelsohn, separation



Music students from Howard University "sit in" with members of the USAF Concert Band during a clinic which was part of a daylong event February 8. In addition to attending a rehearsal and meeting one-on-one with the musicians, the students took home a priceless gift - a first-hand look at a career opportunity as a military musician.

Concert Band

By Technical Sergeant Will Jones

During the month of January, the Concert Band spent a week recording music for its two newest compact discs. The following narrative reflects my impressions of the recording experience. On the stage, four magic marker sized microphones sit in front of the band issuing their silent challenge to play perfectly, without mistakes. As an ensemble, we want technical perfection. But there is a danger. If we become technical zealots, sacrificing emotion and passion for the sake of technical perfection, we will create a recording that no one will want to listen to. If these recordings sit cold and lifeless on library shelves we will have failed our mission.

The Concert Band rises to the challenge by fine-tuning our concentration and focusing every ounce of attention on the task at hand. We know that the last hour of recording must have the same laser beam attention to accuracy and heartfelt emotional creativity as the first. We know we have to be tip-top at the end of the day, the same as we were four or five hours earlier, at the beginning.

Colonel Graham's recording techniques are a perfect blend of art and science. First, the Band plays the entire piece three times. This is what's known in the industry as a "bed take." As we play, our producers sit in another room. They listen through headphones and follow the musical score, listening for mistakes and imperfections. During the Band's breaks, the producers confer with the Colonel, and decisions about re-takes are made. The band returns and plays shorter sections, called plugs, and through the miracle of technology the engineers will cut and paste these materials together to create a coherent and accurate musical picture.

In order to create the perfect sonic environment, the band employs a few other interesting techniques. Following the last note of a bed take, the

band is stone cold quiet for seven seconds. No one moves a muscle, instruments stay in the play position, I hardly even breathe. Finally, when Colonel Graham lowers his arms, we all relax in a collective exhalation. I shuffle my feet, empty spit valves and shake out the tension. I'm ready for a second shot—a second run through the Hindemith Symphony for Band.

This week of recording is only one small part of the process. It is the culmination of months of planning by the Recording Production staff. There are liner notes to be written, a venue to be chosen and permissions granted. Cover art and titles require thought and creativity as well. Though the musical preparation and recording cover a span of only a few weeks, recording this great music serves to capture many years of individual commitment, and over sixty years of the ensemble's evolution since its founding in the early 1940s.

The Band creates compact disc recordings to preserve our American heritage and serve as educational tools for music educators and public libraries; two important aspects of the Band's mission. Recordings produced by The United States Air Force Band are not for sale, but you can enjoy them in a very simple way. Visit your local public library. If your library does not have the Band's recordings, please ask the audio reference librarian to request them in writing on their official letterhead. Educators wishing to share our recordings with their students may also write us to request recordings. The address for requests is: The USAF Band/BAP, 201 McChord Street, Bolling AFB, D.C. 20332.

For our readers in Virginia, North and South Carolina, Georgia and Florida, don't forget to check the calendar on page 7 for the Concert Band's spring tour schedule. ☺

Silver Wings

By Technical Sergeant Matthew Ascione



Tech. Sgt. Matthew Ascione

This month, we turn our attention from Buffalo, New York, to Annapolis, Maryland! The sixth and final interview with members of The United States Air Force Silver Wings brings us to...me! I am Technical Sergeant Matthew Ascione, and this month you will learn a little bit about me instead of reading my interview with someone else! So, as the subject of this issue's interview, this is what I have to say:

My father, Navy Commander (Ret.) Raymond Ascione, spent 35 years as a career Navy Band musician, so I was introduced early on to military music. My earliest musical experience was piano lessons. I was just 8 years old, but my dad felt it was important for us to learn piano, a concept I really didn't understand at the time. Eventually, I realized why it was, and still is, so important for all musicians to learn that instrument. Then, through my dad's strong influence, I took up his instrument, the clarinet. I think the clarinet came to me more easily, but I discovered that I loved melody and harmony, and the way they come together. It was almost as if I needed to hear more than the clarinet could deliver.

The style of music I preferred at the time—junior high school—was rock. My favorite bands were Van Halen, Yes and Rush. Rush was a big one for me. When I heard Alex Lifeson and Geddy Lee play YYY, I knew I had to be a part of whatever it was. I needed to figure out the puzzle of notes they were playing. I was hooked! I think in a large way, these technically advanced rock bands of the late 70s and early 80s led me to the guitar. My parents had an old May Bell guitar that belonged to my Grandmother. I became extremely curious about how the guitar worked and sounded, specifically about how guitarists produced their unique sounds on the records I listened to. I took the little May Bell and played it for hours, just enjoying the different combinations of notes and colors that could be garnered from it. It wasn't long before I was totally immersed in the "guitarness" of it all.

I played all the time with whomever, whenever, to gain as much experience as possible. Throughout my teens, I played in high school jazz bands, rock bands, and in society gigs with my dad. My big break came when Busch Gardens, Williamsburg, held auditions in our area in 1988. My brother and I both auditioned for the theme park, and were invited to join the 1989 spring/summer cast. Since I had just graduated from high school, the timing was perfect.

The experience was a rude awakening! I had been the biggest fish in my high school pond, and suddenly I was playing with professional

musicians who really knew their craft. It was extremely difficult for me to keep up at first, but I wouldn't trade the experience for anything. I played there for 5 seasons, averaging 6 shows per day! This was invaluable experience for me. From there, I formed my own country-rock band and sailed the high seas with Premier Cruise Lines. The best thing about that experience was that I met my wife Janet! I stayed with Premier for almost 2 years, and then decided it was time to think about job security.

At the time, I thought I would be the one family member who wouldn't go into the military music field—my father, brothers and uncle were all military bandsmen. I was dreaming that I would "make it big" in the entertainment business. As one gets older, however, reality becomes extremely clear...I knew I needed to keep paying my bills when the contract for the cruise line ended. So, I found myself headed for the Air Force Band of the Golden West out in sunny California! I auditioned for and won a position in Galaxy, the popular music group. I was stationed at Travis Air Force Base for two and a half years, and was then sent to the beautiful big island of Hawaii, to the Air Force Band of the Pacific. Janet and I had a great time there and made many friends. We really didn't want to leave, but we knew the assignment wouldn't last forever. So, when an opening for a guitarist in Silver Wings was advertised, I jumped at the chance! I auditioned in March 1999 and joined the group the following August.

Silver Wings has provided me with a great opportunity to play country music, which I love, and to work with great musicians and people. The members of Silver Wings have been a lot of fun to work with, and have become life-long friends. I see an extremely bright future for the band, and I look forward to discovering what that future is!

The best thing about being an Air Force musician is the opportunity to have steady employment while practicing a craft that I love. I play the guitar for a living, and serve my country at the same time. I also have been given the opportunity to produce our recordings, another passion of mine. What can I say, I have it all!! ☺



Sgt. Ascione performing with Silver Wings.

Are you moving? If so, let us know. One of our big challenges is to keep our database current. You can help us! We will make sure your address is updated in our system, so Cadenza can follow you to your new home. Drop a line to:

United States Air Force Band/BAP
201 McChord Street
Bolling Air Force Base, DC 20332-0202

You may also send e-mail to:
Kynneth.Sutton@bolling.af.mil

Please include both your old and new addresses. Thanks for your help!

Alumni News

By Chief Master Sergeant (Ret.) Harry Gleeson

The year was 1948, and Henry Gass, an aspiring trombonist and arranger, was home in Reading, Pennsylvania. On summer break, following his first year at Ithaca College, he was playing in Walter Beeler's summer band along with a flutist named Arnald Gabriel.

"It was at this point that a series of serendipitous events started to unfold. The United States Air Force Band came to Reading to play the Reading Fair. (Colonel Howard enjoyed bringing the band to his home territory.) Leo Kellar, a trombone player with the Band, dropped into my father's flour mill looking for a fellow model circus wagon hobbyist who lived across the road. Leo and my father got to talking, and somehow, Leo was invited to lunch at our house to meet me, an aspiring trombone player. Well, one thing led to another. Leo's promotion of Air Force music and the glamour of the Band's performance at the Reading Fair was enough to convince me that I might be better off in the Air Force than at Ithaca."

"I went into town for an interview with CWO Sam Kurtz, who assured me that the Air Force held great promise for any student of Walter Gier and Walter Beeler. On the spur of the moment, I enlisted and was sent off to basic training. Sam Kurtz would later tell me, following basic training when I tried to get into the Lackland Air Force Base Band he had taken over, that I wasn't good enough for that band ... another fortuitous event. Sam had never heard me play. He sent me off to band school at Bolling Air Force Base."

"At Bolling in January, 1949, I ran into Leo Kellar again. With nothing to lose, I naively asked Leo whether they needed any arrangers around there. Well, as it happened, they did. Two arrangers, Jon Leffler and Bill Pursell, had just been discharged. Leo arranged an interview for me with Colonel (then Major) Howard. The few arrangements I had written in high school hardly qualified me for a spot on the arranging staff, but my Reading roots and study with Walter Gier intrigued the Colonel. He gave me a six-month trial period, telling me that at the end of six months I'd either be an arranger with The Air Force Band or a trombone player with a field band."

"Fred Kepner was the chief arranger at that time. He was a great help but when he gave me a stack of blank score paper and suggested I write an arrangement of *Cruising Down The River* for the Singing Sergeants and the orchestra, I came pretty close to panic. There were all those instruments I had never encountered – a string section, English horn, harp, bassoons, etc., and a male chorus to boot. Well, wonder of wonders, I did the arrangement and it played. Imagine the thrill when I heard my arrangement of *Cruising Down The River* played on the Air Force Hour radio program."

"I was off on the greatest learning experience anyone could have in the field of music. Everything I wrote was immediately played back for me by a wonderful orchestra. I studied the arrangements Fred Kepner was writing, sought and received his advice, and referred to my Forsythe orchestration book. The instruction I received from Colonel Howard was simple. Write arrangements that are effective and play without a lot of rehearsal, and stay away from the podium when he is rehearsing. I worked at it. Almost all the writing in those days was for the orchestra

that was doing radio shows, i.e., *The Air Force Hour*, *Serenade in Blue* and, in conjunction with the other service bands, *Time For Defense*. To the best of my recollection, everything I wrote, played. The arrangements were not always musical gems but they met the Colonel's criteria and served to solidify my position with the Band."



(l to r) Master Sgt. Henry Gass, Staff Sgt. Floyd E. Werle and Airman Second Class Al Lessner circa 1952.

around that time, the Colonel was displeased with an arrangement that had been done by some aspiring arranger whose name I can't remember. I was in the rehearsal hall. The Colonel turned around and asked, 'Who's in charge of this arranging staff? Sergeant Gass, how did this arrangement get onto the stands? Don't let it happen again.' That's how I got to be chief arranger."

"In late 1951 or early 1952, the Band had two foreign tours scheduled, one to South America and the other to Europe. I wanted to make the tours so I asked whether there was any way I could do so. I was told to take Leo Kellar's chair in the trombone section. Leo had transferred over to the Airmen of Note, and once again opened a door for me. So, I bought Leo's trombone and worked hard to get some chops back after three years of not touching the horn. As things turned out, both tours were cancelled at the last minute and I wound up playing the Capitol Steps all summer. Not exactly what I had in mind. The only tour I did on trombone with the Band was a short one by train to Kansas City and back. Big deal!"

"My discharge date was coming up in August, 1952, one month short of the four year anniversary of my enlistment. The obvious question was whether I should re-enlist. I vacillated. The Colonel visited my home in Reading and told my parents how valuable I was to the Band. He even suggested sending me on temporary duty to a band in France so I could study with Nadia Boulanger, of all things. Re-enlistment was very tempting and there was a fine re-enlistment bonus available if I stayed. But, I was engaged to be married and was concerned that my lack of a college degree would come back to haunt me later in life. In the first of a number of questionable decisions in my life, I opted to return to school while I had the chance. I've often wondered what would have happened if I had stayed. But it was not to be."

"It was at this point that Floyd Werle succeeded me as chief arranger and began what has to be one of the most outstanding tours of duty with the Band. I had turned out to be a competent arranger, but Floyd and Sammy Nestico were brilliant arrangers. They had more great ideas in a single day than I had in a month of Sundays. I knew it and I think

Colonel Howard realized the same thing. When I left the band, the only concern he expressed was where he was going to find another trombone player. He knew he had a great arranger in the wings."

"There has never been any doubt in my mind that Colonel Howard, in giving me the opportunity he did, was one of the people who made a big difference in my life. I have always been grateful to him and was happy to be able to maintain a friendship with him throughout his life. My time with the Band did more for my musical education than the six additional years of study I had after returning to Ithaca College and ultimately enrolling at Teachers College, Columbia University. And it was my experience with the Band, rather than the college degrees, that provided the credentials which opened musical doors for me throughout my life."

Following his college days, Henry worked for Charles Hansen Music Corp. in New York City for one year, then three years as a high school band director followed by four years on various college faculties. "I

guess the best teaching years were at Ithaca College, which had a fine music program. But even there, I never found the satisfaction and simple fun with music that I had experienced with The Air Force Band." Henry eventually enrolled in the University of Pennsylvania Law School in Philadelphia, from which he graduated first in his class. He returned to Reading and became a member of a twelve-man firm in his hometown, where his practice was primarily tax and corporate law.

Music, however, was never far away, and he eventually became Assistant Conductor of the Reading Symphony, a position he held from the mid 70s to the late 80s, contributing a number of arrangements to that organization, particularly for its pops concerts, as well as supplying arrangements to other ensembles and having several published. Now fully retired and living near West Chester, Pennsylvania, he's back to his first love – arranging. One final item – Henry entered the Air Force as an E-1. He left four years later a Master Sergeant. ☺

Brass Biz

By Master Sergeant Anthony Kirkland

Great job and kudos to The USAF Band's Ceremonial Support Team, which has been named Team of the Year! The team, made up of 17 members of the Ceremonial Brass and two members of the Music Production staff, was recognized for its achievements in 2001. The award includes recognition for the team's work on the 54th Presidential Inauguration, two NBC *Today* show appearances, the Armed Forces State Funeral Plan, and direct support to the Brazilian military's ceremonial music program. Details of the team's accomplishments include the development and coordination of all aspects of training and the subsequent performance by the 158 USAF Band members who participated in the inaugural festivities for President George W. Bush and Vice-President Richard Cheney in January 2001. The two NBC *Today* show appearances performed by the Brass in 2001 carried the Air Force message to over 26 million viewers. Also recognized was the team's development of training plans to ensure the Band's readiness to participate in State Funerals, and the masterful coordination and innovative design of ceremonial materials for the Brazilian military. Congratulations to these hard-working folks who ensured that The United States Air Force Band marched smartly into the living rooms of millions of viewers worldwide!

The Brass also acknowledges Master Sergeant Michael Bosch for successfully completing the Noncommissioned Officers Academy in December. This six-week course, held at McGuire Air Force Base, New Jersey, gave Sgt. Bosch the opportunity to learn leadership, communication skills and the role of the noncommissioned officer in the Air Force. Sgt. Bosch also distinguished himself by picking up a couple of awards along the way—he was a Distinguished Graduate (awarded to the top ten percent of the graduating class) and he also received the Academic Achievement Award for earning the highest marks in his class.

In other events, Senior Master Sergeant Ed Teleky performed as guest conductor during The New Jersey Music Educators Association South Jersey Wind Ensemble concert held at Rowan University in January. On January 31, the Ceremonial Brass was honored to perform for the new Air Force chief of staff, General John P. Jumper, as he hosted his first Air Force arrival ceremony at the Bolling Officers' Club. On January 25, tubist Master Sergeant Gil Corella conducted a highly

successful clinic to a capacity audience at The United States Army Band's annual Tuba/Euphonium Conference. On March 5, Master Sgt. Corella will conduct a brass choir concert with personnel from the Brass and Concert Band at the George Washington National Masonic Memorial as part of the Band's Chamber Players Series.

Don't forget to look for the Brass on Constitution Avenue on March 17. The United States Air Force Band will lead the Armed Forces bands stepping off the St. Patrick's Day Parade in Washington, D.C.

As you know, one important aspect of the Ceremonial Brass mission is rendering final honors for military members at Arlington National Cemetery. In recent years, requests for funeral support have increased significantly. To continue meeting the needs of Air Force families, the Ceremonial Brass is pleased to announce the addition of 29 new positions to its ranks. Vacancies have been identified for all brass and percussion instruments. For information about auditions, please contact the Band's office of Personnel Acquisitions by calling (202) 404-3477, or visit the Band's web page at www.bolling.af.mil/band. ☺



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